

Japanese Travelers to
CALIFORNIA

Prepared for
California Tourism



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February 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JAPANESE TRAVELERS TO CALIFORNIA

Total Market. Of 3,884,000 Japanese visitors to the U.S., 18.6%, or 722,000 visited California in 2005. This represented a 14.6% increase from 2004, and a drop of 43% from the peak year of 1997. Japanese arrival volumes at California ports-of-entry were showing a decrease in 2006 after remaining level the previous two years.

	Visitors to CA from Japan (est.)	Japan to CA as % of total US
1994	772,000	20.3%
1995	938,000	20.4%
1996	1,166,000	22.5%
1997	1,256,000	23.4%
1998	1,124,000	23.0%
1999	1,081,000	22.4%
2000	1,103,000	21.8%
2001	849,000	20.8%
2002	653,000	18.0%
2003	590,000	18.6%
2004	630,000	16.8%
2005	722,000	18.6%

Main Destination. About four-fifths of all Japanese visitors to California (80%) reported California was the main destination of their U.S. trip. Leisure visitors from Japan reported a similar percentage (82%).

Purpose of Trip. Among all Japanese visitors to California in 2005, 48% reported vacation/holiday was one of their major reasons for traveling. Other reasons for traveling included business (41%), visiting friends/relatives (24%), and attending a convention (15%).

Visitors often report multiple purposes of trip. Most leisure visitors from Japan (87%) reported visiting California in 2005 on vacation/holiday. The proportion of leisure visitors who were visiting friends and relatives was 42%, down from 45% in 2004.

Port of Entry. A combined total of 76% of Japanese visitors to California entered the U.S. through west coast ports. Nearly half (47%) entered through Los Angeles, followed by San Francisco (27%), and Seattle (2%). The third highest city was Detroit which processed 7% of Japanese visitors to California, surpassing Chicago (3%) and New York (3%).

Top Metropolitan Areas Visited in California. Japanese visitors to California in 2005 tended to center their trip itineraries on the major cities of Los Angeles (49%), San Francisco (37%) and Anaheim (12%).

Leisure/Recreation Activities. The top leisure and recreation activities reported by visitors from Japan, whether traveling for business or leisure, were shopping, dining and sightseeing. Japanese travelers are less likely to frequent historical sites, art galleries and museums and to visit national parks than other overseas visitor groups.

Advance Trip Decision. Japanese travelers to California reported making their trip decision 52 days in advance of their trip. This is a shorter average trip decision time than the 90 days reported by all overseas visitors to California. Japanese leisure travelers made their trip decision 65 days in advance of their trip.

Means of Booking Air Trip. About three-fifths of Japanese travelers to California (58%) booked their air trip via a travel agent, up from 57% in 2004. This result was in line with other major overseas markets to California.

Means of Booking Lodging. About 30% of all Japanese visitors and 38% of Japanese leisure travelers pre-booked their lodging via a travel agent. These percentages have been gradually declining in recent years in favor of direct booking. In 2005 7% of Japanese travelers reported booking lodging through a tour operator. About 38% of leisure Japanese travelers used travel agents to book their accommodations and 11% used a tour operator.

Trip Information Sources. Among Japanese visitors to California, the most frequently mentioned sources of information included: a travel agency (48%), followed by personal computer (41%), tour companies (16%), corporate travel departments (16%), friends/relatives (16%), and direct information from airlines (15%).

Length of Stay. Japanese visitors stayed an average of 10.3 nights in the U.S. and 6.8 nights in California. Length of stay was down from 8.2 nights in 2004. In comparison the length of stay for all overseas visitors to California was 10.6 nights in the state.

Sex and Age. Men comprised 73% of Japanese travelers to California with a median age of 44 years. This is about the same median age reported by all overseas visitors to California (42 years). Women represented 27% of all Japanese travelers to California in 2005, with a median age of 39 years compared to 40 years reported by all overseas female visitors. Looking at leisure travel only, the proportions tend to even out. About 53% of Japanese leisure travelers to California are men and 47% are women.

Travel Party Size. Nearly all (94%) of Japanese travel groups consist of adults only. Only 6% of Japanese travel groups to California include children. The mean travel party size for all Japanese visitors to the state was 1.5 people and the party size for leisure visitors was 1.9 people.

Annual Household Income. Visitors from Japan reported relatively high median household incomes (\$97,100) relative to all overseas visitors to California (\$78,800). The median household income of Japanese leisure visitors to California was (\$84,300).

Accommodations. Close to nine in ten Japanese visitors (87%) to California chose a hotel or motel as their primary type of accommodation during their stay in 2005. This proportion is higher than the 79% reported by all overseas visitors to California. Japanese leisure visitors also reported a high propensity to stay in a hotel/motel (79%). Only 16% of all Japanese visitors and 26% of Japanese leisure visitors stayed in a private home in 2005.

Use of Prepaid Package. Use of prepaid packages has risen somewhat since 2004. In 2005, 16% of Japanese visitors and 30% of Japanese leisure visitors used prepaid packages, versus 15% and 26%, respectively, in 2004.

Expenditures. Visitors to California from Japan spent an estimated 864 million dollars in California in 2005. Japanese visitors were spending an average of \$176 per day during their visit, more than any other major overseas visitor group. Leisure visitors from Japan spent an average of \$166 per day. Each visitor to California from Japan spent an average of \$1,197 in the state, and each leisure visitor spent an average of \$1,029 in California.

Average International Airfare. Average international airfare to the U.S. was \$2,626 for Japanese visitors and \$1,299 for leisure visitors.